

Tennessee

Human Rights Commission

Annual Report 2010



Civil Rights...Not Just for Some...For All.



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Beverly L. Watts
Executive Director



**TENNESSEE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CENTRAL OFFICE**

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The Honorable Phil Bredesen
Governor
State of Tennessee
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Members of the General Assembly
State of Tennessee
Legislative Plaza
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Dear Governor Bredesen and Members of the General Assembly:

I am pleased to provide you with the Tennessee Human Rights Commission 2009-2010 Annual Report. This report covers the period of July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

The Commission is dedicated to ensuring equality in Tennessee. With all of the challenges that have faced our great State including a hard economic climate, and most recently the tragic flooding, I am proud to say our dedicated staff has worked even more diligently to provide the highest quality services to Tennesseans.

This report provides a summary of the services and accomplishments of the agency. During this time, we have implemented a new community-based outreach program to expand our education efforts to citizens. We continue to close an impressive number of cases in both our Employment and Housing Divisions. Our mediation services program is growing and reaching more people. We also have taken on the added responsibility of ensuring Title VI compliance in the state.

We will continue to ensure that those within the state of Tennessee are treated with respect and equality.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,

Beverly L. Watts
Executive Director

Message from the Chair



I am privileged to serve a second term as chair of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission Board of Commissioners. It is an honor to work side by side with dedicated Commissioners, a highly professional and knowledgeable Executive Director, and trained staff who labor diligently to protect the civil rights of all people of Tennessee.

This past year has brought many challenges to the Commission, which included budget cuts, staff shortages, and the great flood. Regardless of the crisis, the Commission carried out its duties with determination.

Annual goals and objectives were set and the Commission staff worked hard to accomplish these goals. As the staff continues to work on complaints of discrimination and to provide technical assistance to individuals, groups and organizations, we know that it is possible to achieve our vision of Tennessee as a place free from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations. We believe as the knowledge of the Commission's work grows the message that Tennessee does not tolerate discrimination and that equal opportunity is the law of our state, we will defeat the foes of prejudice, intolerance, and ignorance.

I am proud to submit to you this annual report on the work and activities of the Commission for 2009-2010. I thank the Governor and the Legislature for their continued support and my fellow Commissioners for allowing me to serve as Chair.

The work of the Commission is important, because it meets the needs of our state's diverse population. I pledge that the Commission will continue to diligently serve our constituents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Pierce".

Patricia Pierce
Chair



History

The Tennessee Human Rights Commission has been in existence under a variety of names and duties for more than 45 years. In 1963, Governor Frank Clement created the Commission under the name the Tennessee Human Relations Commission. The Commission was initially created to advise the public on their human rights. In addition to advising, the Commission also worked to create, promote, and encourage equal opportunity for all Tennesseans regardless of race, color, creed, or national origin by researching and making reports on race relations and reporting those findings to the governor. The Commission accomplished this by working closely with other government agencies with similar duties.



Former Executive Director of Metro Human Relations Commission, Fred Cloud; Former Executive Director of the TN Commission for Human Development, Arnette Montague; and former THRC Compliance Director, Patricia Pierce holding a copy of the newly signed human rights law.

The Commission served in this capacity until four years later when the Public Acts of 1967 passed. The passage of this act created the Tennessee Commission on Human Development. This Commission absorbed the duties of the previous Human Relations Commission, but adopted rules and regulations that governed its proceedings. It also expanded the Commission's protected classes to include sex. A significant event which changed the dynamics of the agency's operations occurred in 1978 when the Tennessee Human Rights Act became law. This Act brought the Commission out of the advisory role and transformed it into the enforcement agency that it is today. In 1979 and 1980, the Act was amended to include two more protected classes, disability and age. In 1983, the name of the Commission officially became the Tennessee Human Rights Commission.

The Commission continued to evolve. An amendment to the Human Rights Act that passed in 1984 expanded the parameters of the Act to include provisions prohibiting discrimination in housing. In 1990, that provision was extended to include familial status and disability as protected classes. The Commission has substantial equivalency with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). As such, the Tennessee Human Rights Commission can enforce the policies set forth in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Title VIII of the Fair Housing Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal civil rights laws. This relationship also allows the Commission to dual file and process complaints of discrimination in housing and employment.

The Commission has an office in four of Tennessee's largest cities: Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga and Knoxville. The 30-person Commission staff is made up of investigators, department directors, attorneys, and administrative personnel.



Mission

The mission of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission is to enforce the Tennessee Human Rights Act and the Tennessee Disability Act by conducting thorough investigations and by educating the public about their rights with respect to discrimination.



THRC Staff at the agency annual staff meeting

Vision

It is the vision of the Commission to ensure that all those within the state of Tennessee are treated with respect and equality.

Purpose

The Commission's purpose is to identify, prevent and eliminate discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations and federal funds through the receipt, investigation, and litigation of allegations of discrimination throughout the state of Tennessee. We seek to safeguard citizens from discrimination by providing leadership and developing community-based education and outreach to promote an understanding of our work. Our responsibilities include encouraging, promoting and developing fair and equal treatment and opportunity for all persons regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, familial status or national origin.



Our Commissioners

The Commission's 15-member board is made up of Tennesseans that represent employers, business owners, religious groups, trade unions, human rights groups and the general public. These individuals are appointed by the Governor to serve terms of six years. Five commissioners from each of the state's three Grand Divisions are appointed to serve on a non-partisan basis. The Board meets six times a year to exercise its authority as defined by the Tennessee Human Rights Act. The current commissioners and their terms are as follows:



Dennis E. Blalock
2012



David J. Cocke
2012



Robert E. Jones
2013



Nathan B. Pride
2015



Jocelyn Wurzburg
2013

West Tennessee



Stacey Garrett
2015



Karla Hewitt
2015



A.J. Starling
2015



Joseph Walker
2010



Spencer Wiggins
2013

Middle Tennessee



Patricia Pierce
2014



Ralph Davis
2012



Paul McDaniel
2015



Ruby Miller
2013



Edwin P. Osborne
2012

East Tennessee

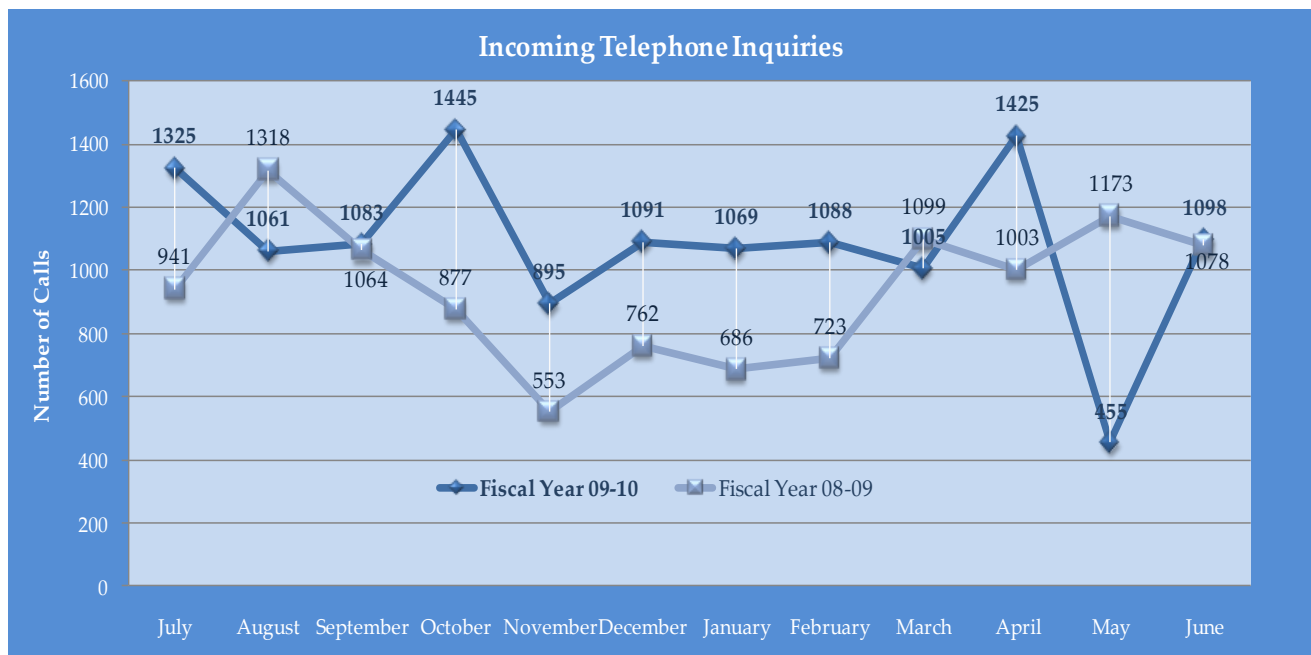


Customer Service & Intake

The Customer Service and Intake units serve as the first point of contact for the Commission. In these two vital departments, interested parties can make general inquiries about available services, obtain the necessary documents to file a complaint of discrimination, or, in some cases, both. Contact with the Commission is typically made by phone but also can be made through mail, email, facsimile, or in-person at one of the regional offices.

A major part of the everyday functions of THRC is responding to calls received by Customer Service. For the year, callers asked questions to get a better understanding of their rights in regard to discrimination and also to request forms to begin the complaint process. During fiscal year 2010, on average, Customer Service answered over 1,080 calls a month. The total calls for the year came to more than 13,000. Of those calls, 1548 resulted in a request for a complaint form to be sent.

Complaint forms that are completed, signed, and returned to the Commission are received by the Intake unit. Intake is responsible for getting these complaints ready for investigation. That process includes determining jurisdiction, notifying respondents of the charges filed against them, and receiving the respondent's position statement. If it is an employment complaint, the information is entered into the Integrated Mission System (IMS). If the complaint is a housing complaint, the information is entered into the Title Eight Automated Paperless Office Tracking System (TEAPOTS).



Enforcement



The identification, prevention and elimination of discrimination occurs through the enforcement efforts of the Commission. This is accomplished through the Employment, Housing, Title VI Compliance and Legal divisions which receive, mediate, initiate investigations and litigate allegations of discrimination. Person who believe that they have experienced discrimination in employment, housing or at a place of public accommodation may file complaints if the alleged discriminatory action occurred no more than 180 days from the time of filing.



Mediation

During the beginning stages of the investigative process, parties involved in an employment complaint are made aware of an option to resolve their case in an easier, faster approach called mediation. Mediation is an alternative method of resolving a complaint that does not involve a full investigation or litigation. These services are offered at no charge to all parties involved.

Besides no cost and quicker resolution of a complaint, there are many other positive benefits to using this method. Mediation gives employers and employees an opportunity to learn from each other by discussing their perspectives on the issues that affect the workplace. This is done in a secure and controlled environment that allows for issues to be addressed that can lead to a more productive working relationship.

Complainants and respondents agree to attempt mediation with the understanding that the service is voluntary, and if settled, the details of the settlement are kept confidential. Agreeing to mediate does not imply that the option for full investigation is no longer available. If an agreement is not reached, the case is then reentered into the investigative process. However, if the mediation brings about acceptable terms for all parties and there is a settlement, then the case is closed.

In August 2009, the Commission held its first ever Mediation Month. The purpose of this month-long event was to encourage parties involved in active investigations to explore mediation as a possible way to resolve their employment discrimination case as well as educate the public on the benefits of mediation. Volunteer mediators from around the state worked alongside the Commission staff to settle 68% of the 27 mediations held.

The Commission's mediation services have shown immense growth from the time the program was reestablished in mid-fiscal year 2009. For fiscal year 2010, of the 64 mediations held, 42 of them were successful resulting in \$193,932 in benefits. These benefits include monetary compensation, reinstatement of jobs, transfers and training.



THRC Executive Director, Beverly Watts; THRC Deputy Director, Tiffany Baker-Cox; and Metro Human Relations Commission Executive Director, Kelvin Jones at a panel discussion in Nashville.



THRC Commissioner, Jocelyn Wurzburg at 2009 Mediation Month event in Nashville.

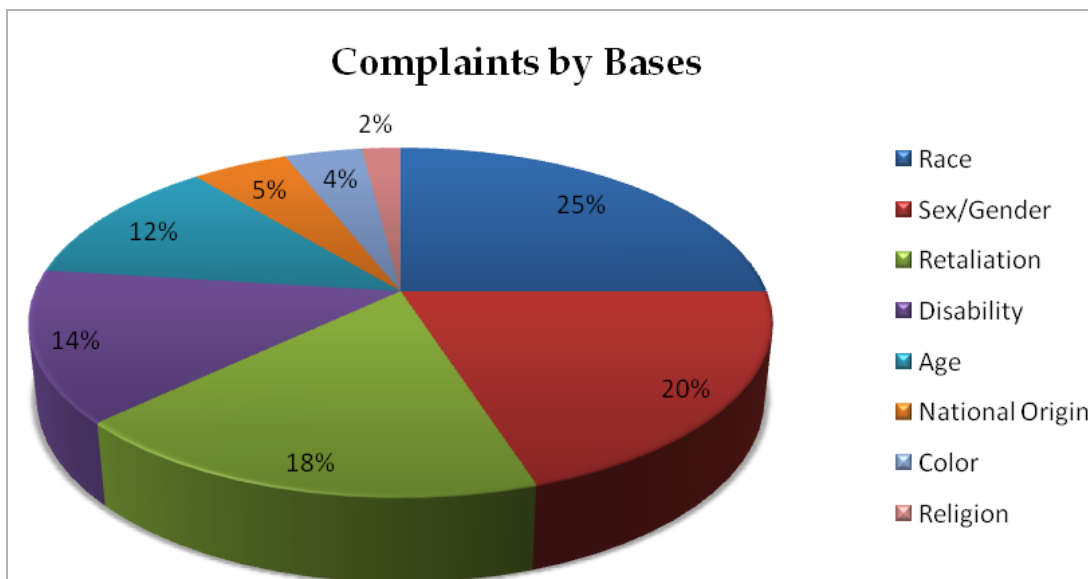


Employment Division

The employment division of the Commission is responsible for processing and investigating complaints in the areas of employment and public accommodation based on race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin and age (over 40). In the fiscal year 2009-2010, this division accepted 597 complaints for investigation. Of those complaints, in accordance with our work share agreement with the EEOC, 459 were dual filed with that agency.

The goals of the Employment Division were to decrease the average case processing time and to increase closures to meet and exceed our work sharing agreement with the EEOC. This fiscal year, the division closed 543 cases compared to 506 cases closed last year. Of those cases closed this fiscal year, 479 were dual filed with EEOC and 64 were THRC only cases. Of these, 3 were cause findings, 65 were settled and/or withdrawn with benefits, and 350 were closed as no cause. The total amount of Benefits and Settlements, which includes settlements, mediations and conciliations, was \$440,898.00, an increase from last fiscal year's total of \$278,525.

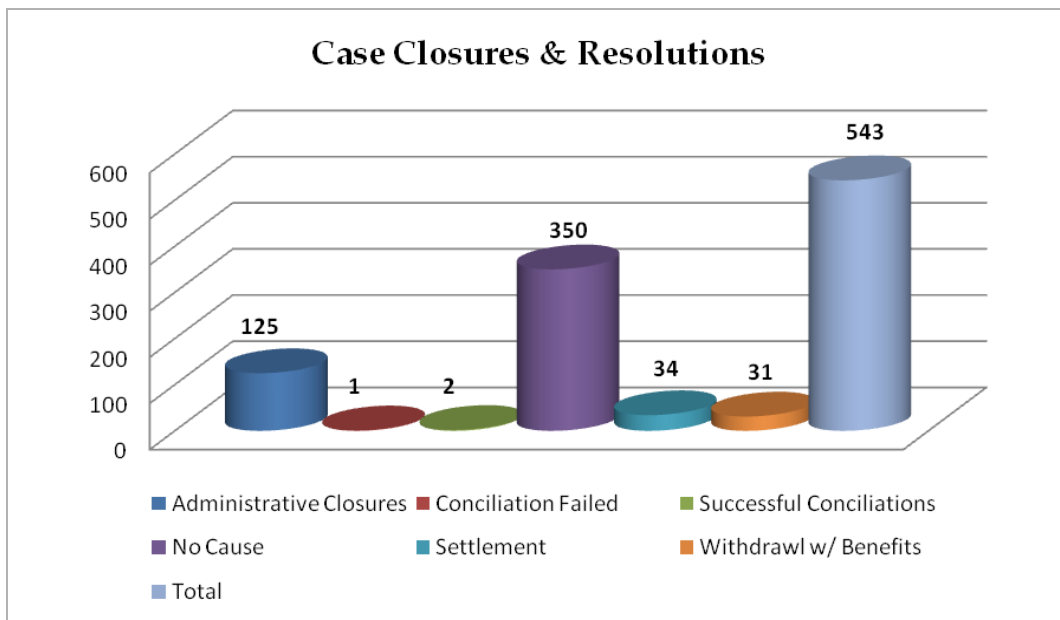
The following charts and illustrations will show the number of employment complaints filed for investigation by bases, the case closures and resolutions, and geographical information for the complaints investigated.



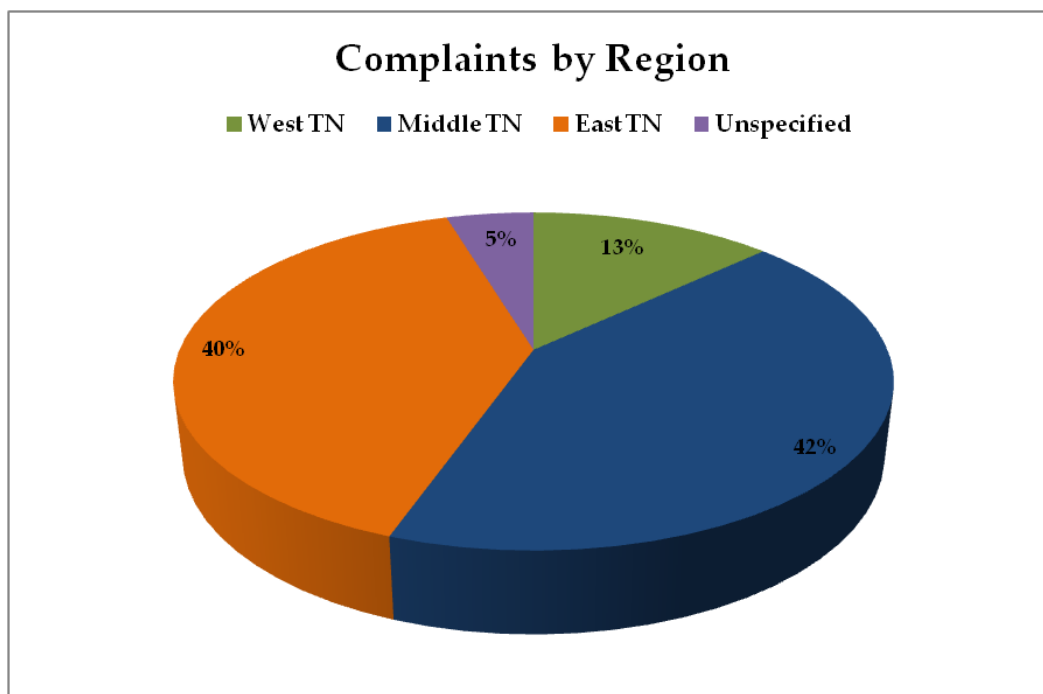
This chart illustrates the charge receipts by issue.



Employment Division



This graphic is a numerical explanation of the total number of closed cases and the types of resolutions reached.



This illustration shows the percentage of the total number of Employments and Public Accommodation complaints investigated, organized by the division of the state which they originated.

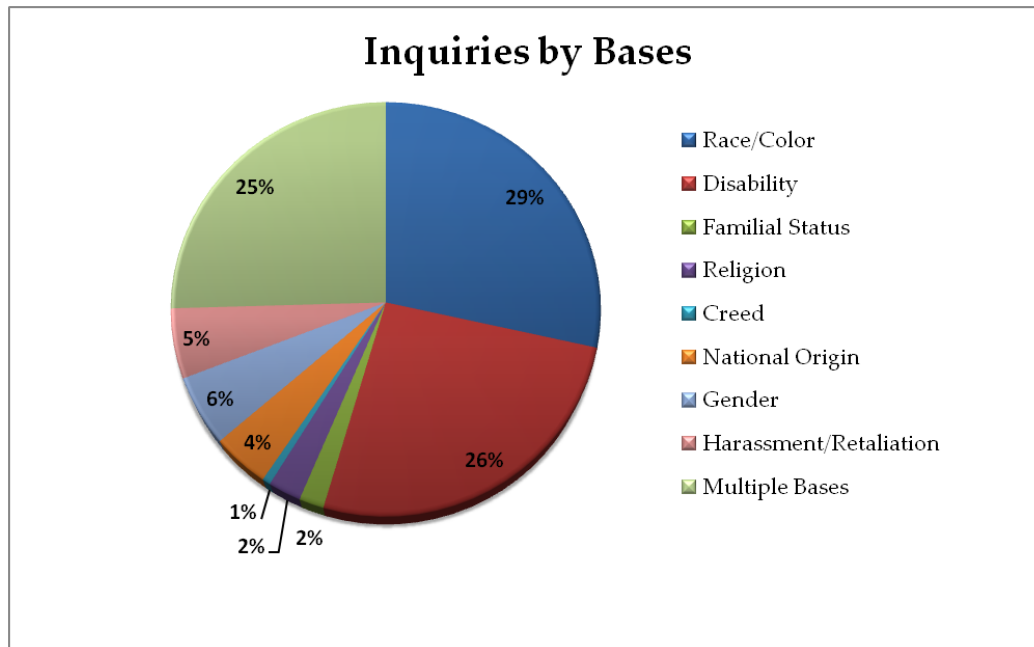


Housing Division

The Commission's Housing Division investigates claims of discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, creed, and familial status as it relates to the sale and rental of commercial and real property. During fiscal year 2010, housing received 172 inquiries; 98 were accepted as complaints for investigation.

The Housing Division set goals to improve case processing that would increase overall numbers across the board. The division accomplished that goal by increasing the number of closed cases to 155 which was an increase over the last fiscal year. This department also saw significant growth in its conciliated cases. There were a total of 30 conciliations compared to 13 in the last fiscal year. These agreements provided a total of \$69,502.36 in benefits to complainants.

The following charts and illustrations will show the number of housing inquiries received by bases, closures and resolutions, and geographical information for the inquiries received.

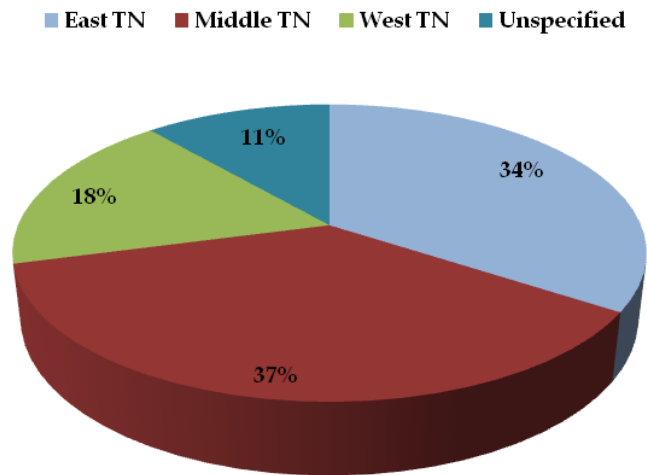


This chart illustrates the inquiries received in the housing division by issue.



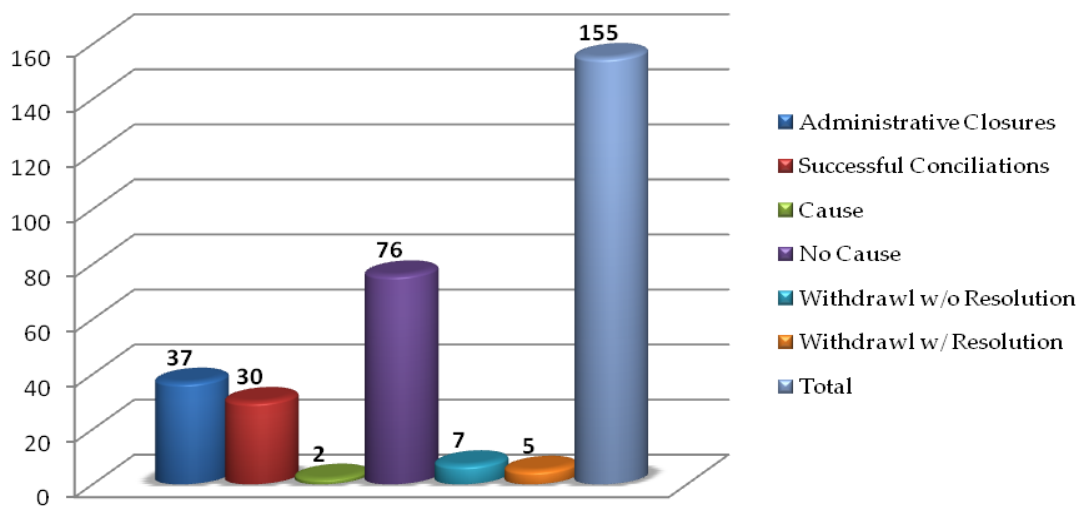
Housing Division

Inquiries by Region



This illustrates the percentage of the total number of Housing inquiries, organized by the division of the state which they originated.

Case Closures & Resolutions



This graphic is a numerical explanation of the number of closed cases and the types of resolutions reached.



Legal Division

The Legal Department is the in-house counsel for the Commission. This team's primary responsibilities are reviewing discrimination complaints for legal sufficiency at all stages of the investigative process and prosecuting cases where the Commission has found that there is reasonable cause to believe discrimination occurred. Additionally, Legal provides guidance and training to staff and Commissioners; conducts reconsiderations of cases; monitors legislation and court cases which may affect the Commission's mission; drafts rules to comply with any legislative changes; ensures compliance of Conciliation Agreements entered in cases; and provides outreach and education to constituents, employers, housing providers and attorneys.



THRC General Counsel, Shay Rose, at a Commission meeting in Chattanooga.

In fiscal year 2010, Legal reviewed and recommended for closure over 600 cases, 365 investigative plans, conducted 23 reconsiderations, found reasonable cause in 3 cases, and conciliated 2 cause cases and several pre-cause cases. Legal has also worked closely with our Title VI Director to draft new proposed rules for the Commission.

State and Federal Legislation and Notable Court Cases

Legal regularly monitors state and federal legislation as well as court cases to keep abreast on the latest developments in anti-discrimination laws.

State Legislation

The 2010 regular session of the 106th General Assembly of Tennessee convened on January 12, 2010. This fiscal year, several bills were introduced that had the potential to affect the Commission; however, the three bills below were especially significant.

House Bill 2685 / Senate Bill 2753

HB2685/SB2753 was signed by the Governor on June 23, 2010 (Public Chapter No. 1089). This bill amends the Tennessee Human Rights Act by allowing employers to require that English be spoken in the workplace if necessary to conduct the employer's business or for safety reasons. The bill also includes a section which creates a private right of action for a volunteer rescue squad worker who is terminated, absent or late to employment due to responding to an emergency.

House Bill 3521 / Senate Bill 3408

HB3521/SB3408 was signed by the Governor on April 14, 2010 (Public Chapter No. 765). This bill amends the Tennessee Human Rights Act by requiring each state governmental entity subject to the requirements of Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act to submit annual Title VI compliance reports and implementation plan updates to THRC instead of the Comptroller's Office, Department of Audit.



Legal Division

House Bill 2940 / Senate Bill 2660

HB2940/SB 2660 which requires all written driver license examinations be given in English did not become law.

Federal Legislation

Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) took effect on November 21, 2009. Title II of GINA prohibits genetic information discrimination in employment making it illegal to discriminate against employees or applicants because of genetic information. Genetic discrimination in employment is enforced by EEOC. Currently there is no state law equivalent to GINA.

U.S. Supreme Court Cases

Crawford v. Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee: In January 2010, a federal jury returned a verdict in favor of Vicky Crawford in an amount more than \$1.5 million which represented compensatory damages, backpay (past financial loss) and frontpay (future financial loss). On January 26, 2009, the Court found, in a unanimous decision, that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964's anti-retaliation provision does protect an employee from being discharged because she cooperated with her employer's internal investigation of sexual harassment.

Lewis v. City of Chicago: In this case, firefighter applicants took a test which was later relied on when determining whom to hire. The applicants (Plaintiffs) claimed that the test had a discriminatory impact on black applicants. An issue was raised during the case as to whether the EEOC complaint was timely filed. On May 24, 2010, the Court unanimously decided that in a disparate impact case, the Title VII statute of limitations is measured from the date of use of the alleged discriminatory policy (when the test scores were actually used to hire the applicants) not from the announcement of the alleged discriminatory policy (when the applicants were notified of their test scores).

With regard to our federal counterparts, EEOC and HUD

EEOC: In September 2009, EEOC published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008. In February 2010, EEOC published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking addressing the meaning of "reasonable factors other than age" under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

HUD: In September 2009, HUD's National Fair Housing Training Academy held a series of free seminars across the nation to address abusive mortgage lending practices and to educate the public about the mortgage lending process. Also, in 2010, HUD launched a national study of housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the sale and rental of housing. In March 2010, HUD held townhall listening sessions in San Francisco, Chicago and New York to solicit feedback for its study.



Title VI Compliance Program

In July of 2009, the Tennessee General Assembly granted the Commission the authority to verify that all state governmental entities comply with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. Under State of Tennessee Public Acts, 2009 Public Chapter No. 437, later codified as Tenn. Code Ann. §4-21-203, the Commission's duties include, but are not limited to:

- reviewing current Title VI monitoring and enforcement procedures as reflected by federal and state statutes, rules, regulations, programs, services, and budgetary priorities;
- defining and establishing the components, guidelines, and objectives of a comprehensive state policy to ensure and promote present and future compliance with Title VI requirements;
- serving as the central coordinating agency for executive branch departments and agencies for technical assistance, consultation, and resources to encourage and assist compliance with the requirements of Title VI;
- investigating allegations of noncompliance with Title VI; and,
- reporting annually to the Governor and the Tennessee General Assembly concerning the Commission's activities, findings, and recommendations.

During the initial year of the Title VI Compliance Program, the Commission accomplished the following:

- hired a director in November 2009 to carry out the duties and responsibilities associated with the program;
- created and drafted proposed state rules and regulations pertaining to the program which govern the functions of the Commission as well as the reporting activities of executive branch departments and agencies subject to Title VI (December 2009 - February 2010);
- published and filed the Notice of Rulemaking Hearing with the Department of State on March 30, 2010-the Notice consisted of both the proposed state rules and regulations of the program for public review and comment and the scheduled dates for the rulemaking hearings;
- held three public rulemaking hearings across the state in Nashville, Knoxville and Jackson during May and June 2010;
- developed and drafted implementation plan guidelines; and,
- conducted training for 36 departments' and agencies' Title VI personnel on June 15, 2010 in Nashville which included an explanation of the duties and responsibilities of the Title VI Compliance Program and the Title VI Implementation Plan Guidelines.



THRC Title VI Director, Marcus Thomas, at the Title VI Coordinator's Training in Nashville.



THRC Deputy Director, Tiffany Baker-Cox gives greetings to the participants at the training event.



Title VI Compliance Program



THRC Executive Director, Beverly Watts, speaks to participants at the Coordinator's Training.

Complaints

The Commission received 209 complaints and inquiries related to Title VI during the fiscal year July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010. The Commission referred 170 complaints to 10 departments and agencies for investigation. Complaints ranged from allegations of discriminatory practices by state employees to the denial of services under specific federally funded programs and activities administered by various executive branch departments and agencies. The total number of complaints received by each department and agency subject to Title VI will be determined by the data provided in each department's Title VI Implementation Plan. All

implementation plans must be submitted annually to the Commission by October 1.

Figures for Fiscal July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010

Total Complaints/ Inquiries Received	Total Number of Com- plaints Referred to De- partments and Agencies	Total Number of Cases Closed	Total Number of Cases Referred, but Pending/ Open
209	170	34	82

Out of 170 complaints referred, 77 (or 45%) were non-jurisdictional.

There were 170 complaints referred by the Commission to 10 state departments and agencies.

Breakdown of Complaints Referred:.

Departments and Agencies	Total Number of Com- plaints Referred	Number of Non- jurisdictional complaints
Board of Regents	1	0
Children's Services	11	10
Correction	138	54
Education	1	1
Housing and Development Agency	2	1
Human Services	4	3
Labor and Workforce Development	3	1
Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities	1	0
TennCare	8	7
Transportation	1	0



Education & Outreach

The Commission's vision of ensuring that all Tennesseans are treated with respect and equality is furthered through its education and outreach efforts. The Commission partnered with state and federal agencies, grassroots, faith-based, and private organizations to promote eliminating discrimination. Through these individual and coordinated efforts, we have heightened awareness and provided training to Tennesseans about the civil rights laws enforced by the Commission. During fiscal year 2010, we estimate that through our efforts we reached approximately 3 million people throughout the state of Tennessee.

We updated our website to include details of the Commission's newly added responsibility of ensuring Title VI compliance for the state, the updated English and Spanish versions of our brochure as well as included more details on the Commission's ongoing outreach events. By the close of the fiscal year, our website received 438,523 hits.

We used television, radio, and newspaper as a means of communicating our message and informing the public of their rights. During fiscal year 2010, the Commission was covered in 11 different news stories; wrote two opinion/editorial pieces printed in the Tennessean and the Commercial Appeal; appeared on five different public information/news programs; and made guest appearances on five different radio programs throughout the state. We also advertised the agency's services and mission in several different targeted media in different parts of the state.

For the fiscal year, most often we worked directly with the members of the community by traveling across the state, participating in 89 education and outreach events with a vast range of partner organizations and groups. These efforts included conducting workshops, making presentations, exhibiting and distributing THRC information at venues, attending meetings, organizing educational seminars and giving speeches. The following is a list of some THRC community partners and programs that we participated in:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ◆ <i>Let's Talk with Ernie Allen- WQQK FM</i> | ◆ <i>Belmont University Mediation & Negotiation Program</i> |
| ◆ <i>22nd Annual Ruby Hurley Image Awards</i> | ◆ <i>Blacks in Government Leadership Luncheon</i> |
| ◆ <i>Women's Economic Summit 2009</i> | ◆ <i>CABLE 2010 Power of Inclusion Luncheon</i> |
| ◆ <i>April 4th Foundation Commemoration of Dr. King</i> | ◆ <i>Celebration of Cultures</i> |



NAACP State Director, Gloria Sweet-Love, and THRC Commissioner A.J. Starling at the 2010 NAACP Day on the Hill in Nashville.



Education & Outreach

- ◆ *Equality Coalition for Housing Opportunities*
- ◆ *Fair Housing Alliance of Greater Memphis*
- ◆ *Hispanic Organization for Progress and Education*
- ◆ *International Human Rights Day Celebration*
- ◆ *Interdenominational Ministries Fellowship*
- ◆ *International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies*
- ◆ *Inward Outlook with Barbara Rucker on Nashville Net Radio*
- ◆ *Jobs with Justice*
- ◆ *Knoxville Area Urban League*
- ◆ *Knoxville Family Justice Center*
- ◆ *Lipscomb University*
- ◆ *Nashville Area Hispanic Chamber of Commerce*
- ◆ *Nashville Conflict Resolution Center*
- ◆ *NAACP State Convention*
- ◆ *Princeton Prize in Race Relations*
- ◆ *Sister-for-Sister Conference*
- ◆ *Society of Human Resource Managers- State Conference*
- ◆ *Tennessee AFL-CIO Conference*
- ◆ *Tennessee Association of Justice Convention*
- ◆ *Tennessee Fair Housing Council*
- ◆ *Tennessee Fair Housing Matters Conference*
- ◆ *Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition*
- ◆ *Tennessee Labor-Management Foundation*
- ◆ *Tennessee State University*
- ◆ *Unity Group of Chattanooga*
- ◆ *Urban League of Memphis Empowerment Event*
- ◆ *YWCA-Stand Against Racism*
- ◆ *Vanderbilt University*

Photo Highlights of THRC Outreach and Education Events



THRC Staff answer questions and provide information at an exhibit at the 2009 Celebration of Cultures.



Executive Director Beverly Watts takes a photo with Senator Thelma Harper following the Princeton Prize in Race Relations event.



Education & Outreach



Deputy Director, Tiffany Baker-Cox, served as mistress of ceremonies at the 2010 Fair Housing Matters Conference.



Executive Director Watts along with Tennessee Housing and Development Agency Deputy Director, Patricia Chatman, and HUD Field Office Director, Bill Dirl, receive the 2010 Fair Housing Month Proclamation from Governor Phil Bredesen.



Farewell program for former THRC Commissioner, Yusuf Hakeem, at his office in Chattanooga, Tenn.



THRC Commissioner, Ruby Miller, at a Commission education and outreach speaking engagement.



Board of Commissioner's Chair, Patricia Pierce, welcomes THRC Commissioners and staff to the 2010 Commission Retreat.



Education & Outreach

Listening Sessions

We launched a statewide listening session tour in an effort to learn more about the issues facing Tennessee's communities and to foster an understanding of the state's civil rights laws as well as the Commission's purpose. These meetings gave commissioners and agency staff an opportunity to conduct an in-person outreach project that allowed members of the general public to bring forward their concerns, questions and challenges with discrimination in the state.

On this three-stop tour, we set up town hall-style meetings in Clarksville, Memphis, and Clinton, Tennessee. These commissioner-facilitated sessions brought out a variety of citizens, human rights organizations and issues. Individuals brought their questions that related to housing, employment, public accommodations and Title VI in which commission staff provided answers, and where applicable, gathered information to being the complaint process.

In the first year of this effort, we reached over 75 individuals and saw representation from more than 15 different organizations. We used the information gathered at the sessions to identify different areas to extend our outreach efforts as well as developed new partnerships with organizations.



THRC Commissioner, A.J. Starling, and THRC Executive Director, Beverly Watts, answer questions at the Clarksville Listening Session.



Attendees at the Clarksville Listening Session.



THRC Commissioner, David Cocke, in a discussion with Sapna Raj of Memphis Area Legal Services following the Memphis Listening Session.



THRC Commissioner, Jocelyn Wurzburg, answers a question of an attendee of the Memphis Listening Session.



Education & Outreach

Employment Law Seminar



THRC Chair, Patricia Pierce; 2010 Employment Law Seminar presenter, George Barrett; and THRC Executive Director, Beverly Watts.



THRC Commissioner, Jocelyn Wurzburg, introducing a speaker at the event.



THRC Deputy Director, Tiffany Baker-Cox, facilitating a panel discussion at the event.



THRC Commissioner, Edwin Osborne, having a discussion with a seminar attendee.

On June 17, 2010, we had our annual Employment Law Seminar at the Willis Conference Center in Nashville. Chair of the Board of Commissioners, Patricia Pierce, and Executive Director, Beverly Watts, opened the meeting with greetings on behalf of the Commission to the attendees.

This year's seminar covered a variety of topics including: Tennessee employment law history; social networking in the workplace; national origin discrimination; organizational inclusion; and updates on employment law. The speakers joined us from a number of different organizations. The presenters were: George Barrett of Barrett, Johnston & Parsley Law Offices; Kim Vance of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz; THRC Commissioner, Stacey Garrett of Bone, McAllester, Norton; Dr. Lisa Nishii of Cornell University; and Waverly Crenshaw and Jeb Gerth of Waller, Lansden, Dortch & Davis. There was also a panel discussion on employer challenges and best practices.

The program offered participants an opportunity to obtain 6.25 hours of continuing legal education and 5.25 hours of Human Resource Recertification credits. A total of 96 people attended the one-day event. Audience survey results showed that participants felt that the event was very informative and was relevant to their everyday work.



Commission Office Locations

Chattanooga Office

540 McCallie Avenue
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Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402
423-634-6837

Barbara Gardner

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James Davis

Laura Nelson

Richard Gadzekpo

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Saadia Williams

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Nashville, Tennessee 37243
1-800-251-3589

Monica Alexander

Leon King

Lila Stafford

Theirno Bah

Pat Ladd

Matthew Stephenson

Tiffany Baker-Cox

Lisa Lancaster

Marcus Thomas

Kaleda Bentley

Bobbie Porter

Beverly Watts

Frank Guzman

Shay Rose

Seth Yu

Billie Jean Haddock

Dianna Ruch



Photo Identification

Front Cover (Left to Right)

- THRC Commissioner, A.J. Starling, and Clarksville Human Relations Commission Chair, Dr. Anderson Grant, at the Clarksville Listening Session.
- Memphis Mayor, A.C. Wharton, and THRC staff member, Linda Reed, at the April 4th Foundation Commemorative event held in Memphis, Tenn.
- THRC Executive Director, Beverly Watts; International Human Rights Day, Civil Rights Advocate Honoree, Inez Crutchfield; and THRC Chair, Patricia Pierce, at the International Human Rights Day Celebration in Nashville, Tenn.
- THRC Deputy-Director, Tiffany Baker-Cox, and 2010 Employment Law Seminar presenter, Dr. Lisa Nishii.
- THRC Commissioner, Ralph Davis, at NAACP State Convention with organization members.

